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Senate

The Senate met at 9:31 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MICHAEL B. ENZI, a Senator from the State of Wyoming.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Dr. Alan Keiran, chief of staff, Senate Chaplain's Office.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

God of grace and glory, we pray this day for our distinguished Senators and the Nation they so ably serve. Equip them with all the wisdom, strength, and perseverance needed to bring the important issues to closure. Bless those they love in their times of separation from family and friends. Bless their staffs as they labor to support the honorable men and women they so willingly serve.

For those military men and women deployed in harm's way, in far places, and their families, we pray Your providential protection. O Lord, our precious Saviour and eternal King, equip our Nation's noble leaders with the wisdom and endurance to meet the challenges ahead.

In Your holy Name we pray. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MICHAEL B. ENZI led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 23, 2004.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MICHAEL B. ENZI, a Senator from the State of Wyoming, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ENZI thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will be in a period for morning business to allow Senators to make statements and to introduce legislation. Yesterday, we began consideration of the pension rate reform bill but did not complete action on that measure. If Senators desire to speak on behalf of that legislation, I do encourage them to come to the floor today during morning business.

As I announced yesterday, there will be no rollcall votes today. When we finish our business today, the Senate will reconvene on Monday to resume debate on this important pension rate bill. I expect amendments to be offered on Monday. However, any votes on Monday will be held over until Tuesday's session. Again, no rollcall votes will occur on Monday.

We will finish the pension bill Tuesday or Wednesday. I very much would like to complete that bill Tuesday, if at all possible, but we will finish it either Tuesday or Wednesday of next week and, as always, Senators will be notified of rollcall votes as they are scheduled.

I thank everybody for their participation and cooperation during the om-

nibus debate. It was the unfinished business from the last session and took a lot of cooperation on both sides of the aisle. That was demonstrated over the last several days, which we all very much appreciate.

The funding measure passed yesterday. As people saw from the ultimate vote, it was a bipartisan measure. It passed by a large bipartisan margin, and I appreciate the Members' assistance as we worked through the unanimous consent agreement in order to bring that bill to conclusion.

Lastly, before we finish our business for the day, we expect to be able to consider additional executive nominations that are on the calendar. I will continue to work with the Democratic leadership to move forward on those nominations that are available. I am pleased the Senate will be able to act on these important positions.

SENATE PAGES

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, in just a few minutes the Democratic leader and I will be participating in the graduation ceremonies for our pages. Although they are not here now because they are with their parents and family members at the beginning of that graduation exercise, I do, as I did last night, pay tribute to them. They are with us every day, every night, morning, noon, night—whatever hours—in order to work with us and make our lives much easier as we work very hard to carry on the Nation's business.

Mr. President, I thank everybody for their attention.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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